

Trade Policy Workshop

Novotel Hotel

December 18, 2002

December 2002



Sigma One Corporation

Trade Policy Workshop

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by:

**Dr. Maury Bredahl
Sigma One Corporation**

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Sigma One Corporation

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Executive Summary

This is a report on proceedings at the one-day Workshop organized by the Ministry of Trade & Industry in collaboration with Sigma One Corporation to promote the development of a National Trade Policy Statement for Ghana and to facilitate interaction with key stakeholder groups.

The focus of the Workshop was the need for a clear and coherent trade policy. A key part of the Workshop was thus dedicated to highlighting the elements required for a trade policy. Bearing in mind developments in the country as well as in international trade, Dr. Kofi Konadu Apraku proposed the following objectives for a Ghana's Trade Policy:

- ◆ Self Centeredness
- ◆ Built on Competitive Advantage
- ◆ Predictability
- ◆ Credibility
- ◆ Liberal versus Protectionist
- ◆ Practicality

In order to achieve these the country needs a Trade Policy that is consistent, comprehensive, concise and coherent. This point was made even clearer during the discussion sessions when participants were given the opportunity to voice concerns and make comments and suggestions on issues and challenges facing the private sector. Participants called for a level playing field for local producers in the domestic and international market. Participants decried the fact that the Government is not providing adequate support to local industries.

By way of finding a solution to effectively addressing issues of Trade Policy, participants gave their support to the establishment of a Trade Policy Coordinating Committee, which was proposed by Sigma One Corporation. The Committee will have representatives from the private and public sector, NGOs and civil society as well as the research community. The setting up of the Committee will ensure a transparent, consistent and predictable structure for addressing issues.

It was agreed that the Committee be set up as an extra-ministerial body that reports to the President or Vice President with research support from a Trade Policy Research Centre.

A Trade Policy Statement for Ghana

Edited by
Maury E. Bredahl
J.E.B. Haizel

The Ministry of Trade & Industry (MOTI) organized a one-day Workshop on the Ghana National Trade Policy Statement at the Novotel Hotel on Tuesday, December 17, 2003. The Workshop was organized as part of the Ministry's continuing efforts at interacting with various stakeholders in the economy to solicit views and inputs for the development of a national trade policy which will serve the interest of all sectors and groups in the country.

Opening Remarks by Chairman Dr. Osei Boeh-Ocansey, Private Enterprise Foundation

The Chairman's remarks centered on the need for a coherent trade policy. Participants were reminded that the Government of Ghana had declared a policy of promoting private sector growth as the main drive for long-term development strategy. To achieve this policy objective, the country needs a clear and coherent trade policy that gives credence to the macroeconomic policy.

The Chairman informed participants of the development of a draft trade policy over the past few months by the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and supported by the Department for International Development and US AID. Consultations with representatives of the private sector, public sector and civil society have sought the creation of a draft policy to create the appropriate trade environment for translating the Government's trade objectives into specific actions.

In developing the draft policy, Ghana's past experience in policy formulation, previous studies on the country and recommendations of a trade debate held in August 2002 were all taken into account. The draft policy had also taken into account, policy options that have been developed for the country's participation in World Trade Organization (WTO), Cotonou Accord, and ECOWAS. The Draft Policy also seeks to address the preoccupations of the private sector with regard to the need for transparency, credibility and predictability in the implementation of policy.

The Chairman concluded his statement by stressing that the Workshop aimed to involve participants in building the necessary consensus for a single and coherent trade policy.

Opening Statement by Honorable Minister for Trade Dr. Kofi Konadu Apraku

The Minister's address identified the elements that constitute an effective trade policy. Before touching on these, however, he reiterated the need for a comprehensive review of the country's trade policy to ascertain successes and failures and to chart a new course that is consistent with the Government's avowed declaration of "A Golden Age of Business." He pointed out that countries that had succeeded in their developmental efforts owed much of their successes to the formulation and pursuit of aggressive trade policies, which have resulted in improved living conditions.

The Government's sought to develop a policy agenda that will enable the country to grow into an agro-based industrial economy within the next 10 to 15 years through export-led development. The Minister stated within this framework, the trade policy review has been carried out and this Workshop contributed to the necessary dialogue to synthesize the findings and outcome of this review and to deliberate on how these can be taken into account in developing a comprehensive trade policy.

Making reference to the country's trade statistics, Dr. Apraku emphasized that Ghana's past performance has not been impressive. This has been in spite of the many efforts made to liberalize the economy, to open markets, and to signal the international community that the country was willing to engage in reciprocity of trade. This poor track record, the Minister said highlighted the need for a trade policy review and in addition, all stakeholders in the country had a responsibility to deliberate on the results and findings of the review as a basis for arriving at effective ideas, programs and policies.

The Minister also stated that in the past trade and industrial policy formulators have not interacted with those engaged in research and academic work nor with the private sector. The Ministry was now proposing more interactions and collaboration with the research and academic community, with NGOs and the businesses community to introduce a new paradigm to Ghana's trade policy and together develop effective policies.

The Minister expressed satisfaction with the fact that a large segment of society was represented at the Workshop. He called for the active participation of everybody at the Workshop, and expressed the hope that not only theoretical ideas but practical ideas that will lead to realistic achievable results will be discussed.

Major Trade Negotiations Affecting the Economy

The Minister noted the country was presently engaged in major trade negotiations, and that these negotiations will have far reaching implications on the economy and should be considered in defining objectives for the country's trade policy.

ACP/EU Trade Negotiations

The ACP/EU trade negotiations will introduce very critical changes in the economy by 2007. These involve extension of the Free Trade Area to cover the entire ACP and EU countries. Trade with Europe will then be mainly on reciprocal basis. The Free Trade Zone, if implemented, will ultimately imply that after 2007, the country's trade with Europe will be on a free of tariffs and of quantitative restrictions. While this will mean greater access to European markets, Ghana will be lose a significant amount of tariff revenue (estimated to be \$52 million per year). The Free Trade will also lead to a surge in imports by about \$115 million per year. These could have adverse effects on the nation's economic growth and development.

The challenge facing the country is thus to provide the needed support to local industries to strengthen and enhance their competitiveness, and also to diversify and expand the country's product base to produce the array of goods required to satisfy domestic demand.

WTO Negotiations

The WTO Negotiations, currently on going in Geneva, involve very fundamental issues in respect of trade, spanning market access, agricultural products, intellectual property, and trade in services.

Objectives of a National Trade Policy

With the above in mind, the framework within which Ghana's Trade Policy should be developed and formulated are presented below.

Self Centeredness

Trade Policies should be designed to improve living conditions and serve the national interest. While trade policy, must be consistent with international and multinational rules and regulations, it should have the central aim of protecting the national interest.

Build on Competitive Advantage

Policies should emphasize on strengthening areas where the country has a natural comparative and competitive advantage. We need to take stock of what we have as a nation and identify strengths.

Predictability

A trade policy should aim to create an environment that allows businesses to have greater certainty of the end product and the end process. As a developing country, uncertainty and associated risks characterize all economic activities. The instability and unpredictability of the macro environment creates a great deal of uncertainty in the system. Trade policy should enable the country to reduce risk and to make international relationships more predictable.

Credibility

Problems have been encountered in international trade as a result of inability to meet international and importing country standards. There are numerous examples of products being rejected on the export market because standards were not met and rules allegedly violated. These affect our credibility and Ghana needs to develop the credibility that it can meet standards. This is very important if Ghana is to produce for export markets.

Liberalization versus Protectionism

Another major issue relates to determining the extent to which a nation's markets have to be liberalized and how much to protect domestic industry. The history of liberalization in Ghana is very recent and yet it has made a significant impact on the economy. A number of problems faced by the local industry can be attributed to the liberalized trade regime introduced in the country. The problem however is not with liberalization *per se*, but there should be as part of the program, of well thought out processes, of systems and mechanisms to provide support to local industries to adjust properly and to improve performance.

The country's trade statistics indicate how liberalization has affected the economy. While exports are declining, imports are rising and, thus, apart from Great Britain, Ghana has a trade deficit with all its major trade partners. The records indicate that liberalization has had an adverse effect on the economy and needs to be reconsidered. It is, however, too late to turn back the clock and to reintroduce protectionism. This is not to say that the problems facing industry as a result of liberalization should not be addressed. The Minister has thus proposed the establishment of a Presidential Commission to review problems facing industries, and to recommend sustainable ways of rehabilitating them and to provide long term sustainable financing.

The Minister reiterated the need to take into account the state of local industry in any attempt to formulate trade policy. This is because in the end, the nation has to produce efficiently for the domestic market before exporting. A fundamental prerequisite of trade policy should thus be the linkage between production with trade. He urged participants to critically evaluate the way forward and give some consideration to the type of support mechanism that ought to be in place to improve the productivity of local industry. The key issue is deciding on the types of interventions that serve the national interest yet are acceptable to our trading partners and in addition are consistent with the political realities and budget constraints.

Practicality

Ghana needs practical recommendations that will be useful to Government and lead to a trade policy that responds to the global challenges and trends as well as national self-interest and takes into account, the commitment to improving the living conditions of the people, producing an agro-based industrial economy, and becoming a major export-led developed country within the

Sub-Region, and becoming a major force, both economically and politically.

¹Elements of a National Trade Policy by Maury E. Bredahl and J.E.B. Haizel

The trade policies of Ghana have been analyzed many times. Words often found in these analyses are:

- ◆ Capricious;
- ◆ Chaotic; and
- ◆ Inconsistent.

The existing policy framework is simply not written down anywhere. (However, it could be compiled from existing laws, regulations and international commitments.) Government actions have been harshly criticized for lacking coordination across ministries. The lack of institutional support for informed, coordinated government policies has been often noted. The lack of routine identification and measurement of unintended side affects of trade actions has been noted several times. Observers note that the elucidation of carefully crafted trade policy, and, even of supporting administrative actions, may not lead to desired outcomes unless they are benchmarked and monitored.

These analysts called for the development of a national trade policy and accompanying statement that would be:

- ◆ Consistent;
- ◆ Comprehensive;
- ◆ Concise; and
- ◆ Coherent.

The trade policies and the supporting administrative procedures of Ghana are a combination of the historical antecedent of widely restricted trade and the more recent commitment to freer trade and more open markets.

Casual observations about the current trade policy is that:

- ◆ there seems to be a determined search for THE new export industry or sector; almost to the exclusion of existing firms or sectors; and
- ◆ an equally determined search for THE trade policy that leads Ghana to the new export industry/sector that provides the means to reduce poverty and to provide the engine for economic growth.

These activities seem to place emphasis on the nation as the unit of observation and action, rather than firms or consumers. The activities seem to ignore what are proclaimed as basic truths: "The business of business is business;" "Governments have no business in business;" and "Firms trade, nations don't!" Nations, or more precisely national governments, do the arithmetic of trade: counting trade as imports (expenditures - a bad thing) and exports (earnings - a good thing).

We propose, rather, that the outcome of trade policy is to empower people and firms:

- ◆ to build on their core competencies by identifying international opportunities, and
- ◆ to develop strategic alliances to exploit both.

¹ Sigma One Corporation

Ghana has a natural absolute advantage in the production of some basic commodities (cocoa and gold, for example) but beyond that economic growth and creation of wealth must ultimately lie with firms and individuals in the production of products (not commodities), and trade policy should empower them to do so. However, there is a broad recognition of the need for a national trade policy statement.

A basic element of good government policies, and by extension of good trade policy, is transparency. Administrative decisions are known and predictable; outcomes of policy and administrative decisions are known and predictable. A lack of transparency contributed to corruption, to economic rent seeking, to uncertainty and to risk. This, in turn, leads to reduced investment, lower levels of economic output and reduced economic growth and wealth creation. If transparency is an essential characteristic of good trade policy, how is it measured? What benchmarks can be developed and routinely monitored to measure the transparency of administrative actions that implement a national trade policy statement.

Two Polar Foundations

A national trade regime can be based on two polar foundations;

- ◆ All trade is assumed restricted unless specifically made free by legislative or administrative action.
- ◆ All trade is assumed free unless specifically restricted by legislative or administrative policy.

At various times in their history, Japan, North Korea, China, Ghana and Vietnam have widely restricted trade. The United States and Great Britain have long practiced a policy that trade is considered free unless specifically restricted.

Trade policy may be based on either of these foundations. In the first case, trade policy must consistently and transparently determine the deviations from prohibitive tariffs or quantitative restrictions. In the second case, trade policy must consistently and transparently determine the deviations from free trade through the applications of tariffs, other price wedges or quantitative restrictions. Evidence from many countries leads to the conclusion that economic growth and national wealth is greater under open regimes than under regimes that systematically restrict the flow of capital and goods.

Regardless of the foundation chosen, national trade policy must be perceived by domestic firms as providing instruments and methods for leveling the playing field against "unfair" international competition. All well developed trade policies make provisions for these actions but all observe the rights and obligations laid down in GATT/WTO Agreements. Such policies that are meant to level the playing field of domestic firms must meet stringent standards for transparency and adoption of restriction on trade must be thoroughly vetted in domestic forums. Domestic firms call for provisions allowing trade remedies to be taken against clearly unfair competition.

Types of Trade Policies and Why They Matter

At these three types, or levels, of trade policies are recognized. The highest level are those policies that influence macro prices (interest rates, exchange rates, tariffs and taxes.) Firms take these macro prices as given and make investment and production decisions accordingly. These policies affect all firms more or less evenly and largely ineffective in efforts to promote particular sectors or firms. At this level are the conduct of bilateral, multilateral and plurilateral trade negotiations.

The second level can be call domestic trade policies. These policies affect firms and consumers differently and unevenly. They affect the efficiency of production and consumption and the cost of carrying out transactions. Examples of these policies include: customs clearance procedures, duty drawbacks, tax refunds, duty free areas and tariff exemptions. These policies should be used only to correct for market failure, to mitigate risk or to enable reaching economies of scale. The third level of trade policies included export promotion and development policies. These policies impact investment in production facilities and the efficiency with which investment funds are used. The funds, often provided by donors, must be allocated in such a way that firms with a competitive advantage can develop strategic alliances to further that advantage. The allocation of these funds should recognize two basic truths: "The business of business is business." and "Governments have no business in business."

In the final analysis, national trade policies must recognize the fundamental different between the interests of nations and the interests of businesses. Nations want firms to have an international competitive advantage. Firms want an advantage. Period. And they really don't care where or how that advantage originates. Import restrictions can be an important and easy way for firms to gain an absolute advantage, at least in domestic markets. National trade policies must provide transparent mechanisms and instruments to balance the national good with the local and individual good.

Level Playing Field

Many Ghanaian firms misunderstand the meaning of trade policy. Many call for government trade policies to create a level playing field. But they, and the associations that represent them, have only a limited notion of what is needed to create a level playing field. It seems that they view national trade policies almost solely as a vehicle to selectively create an absolute competitive advantage. But, trade policy is a very poor instrument to accomplish this end as any action taken to restrict the free importation of intermediate inputs or final consumer goods must have corresponding spill-over effects on other producers and on consumers. So, national trade policies must provide the opportunity to seek relief from unfair trade practices, not to create a competitive advantage, and such policies must respect international norms and practices.

Policy Benchmarks and Monitoring

Ghana may not need new policies. Many analyses conclude that a number of well-founded policies have been enacted, but that implementation of those policies has fallen well short of the mark. Ghana clearly needs a procedure and supporting institutions to identify benchmarks to measure policy implementation and to monitor policies. It is short-sighted to identify economic outcomes as the measure of success or failure of a single policy because economic outcomes are the result of the interactions of government policies, firms and consumer actions, and events external to the nation. Benchmarks should, instead, measure the implementation of policies.

Institutional Innovation and Development

Clearly, the development and implementation of a more carefully focused trade policy regime for Ghana would be facilitated by the creation of innovative institutions to support those activities. To that end, we offer the institutions and structure shown in Figure 1.

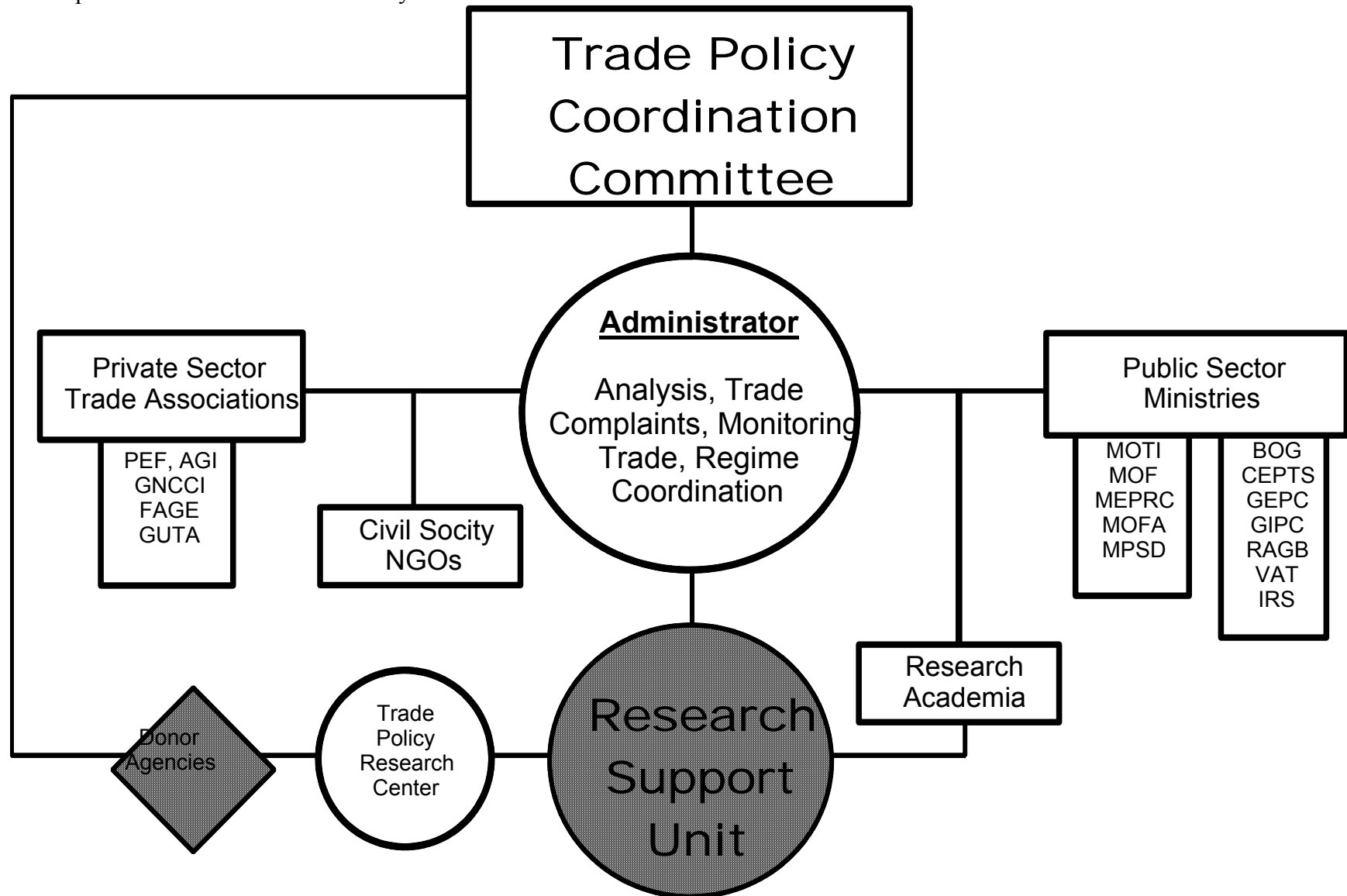
To facilitate the coordination of policy development and implementation across the many ministries that influence trade policy, a Trade Policy Coordination Committee (TPCC) is proposed. This committee would coordinate analysis of trade policies, would develop and implement procedures to address trade complaints, would monitor trade and the implementation of trade policies and would coordinate the development and implementation of the trade regime.

The activities of the Trade Policy Coordination Committee would be supported by a Trade Policy Research Support Unit and by a Trade Policy Research Center in the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The views of private sector trade associations, civil society and NGOs would be routinely and effectively incorporated into activities of the TPCC. The development and implementation of trade policies would be coordinated across several ministries and appropriate government agencies.

Of course, these institutions innovations will not be costless. We propose that donor agencies undertake the support of the activities of the TPCC, of the Trade Policy Research Center and of the Research Support Unit. Further, funds should be provided to capture the considerable talent of Ghanaian universities and research centers in the analysis of policy alternatives and innovations.

We invite the consideration of this proposal at this Workshop.

1. Proposal Structure for a Trade Policy Coordination Committee.



Discussion Session: Issues Affecting the Private Sector

Participants were given the opportunity to generally respond to some of the issues raised so far at the Workshop and to highlight in particular, concerns of the private sector with respect to Ghana's trade policy. The session attracted a lot of questions, comments and suggestions, to which the public sector was given the chance to respond to. (Please refer to Appendix 2 for more details).

Major Issues & Concerns

Major issues and concerns raised by private sector operators present at the Workshop were as follows:

- ◆ There are some aspects of Ghana's trade policy which expose local industries to unfair competition from imported goods. This is impeding the growth of many local industries and even pushing many out of the market. Even within the country, there is no level playing field. There are a lot of disparities, placing some industries or products at an advantage over others.
- ◆ Ghana's excise duty regime as compared with countries within the ECOWAS Zone puts local industries at a disadvantage when it comes to trade within the sub-region. While other ECOWAS countries are putting up barriers to trade, Ghana has opened up its barriers to these countries.
- ◆ While Ghanaians are able to collaborate on political terms, they are unwilling to cooperate and collaborate with each other on economic terms. This attitude does not encourage the development of strategic alliances.
- ◆ Government continues to consider the private sector as an afterthought and in today's international environment it is very difficult to create something where business empowerment is an afterthought.
- ◆ In the past, Government has regarded businessmen with suspicion and portrayed them as crooks. This has not encouraged people to take up business as a serious venture.
- ◆ Ghana has a large informal trade sector and yet no trade policy has identified this group to provide them with the direction needed to modernize their operations.
- ◆ No clear policies have been put in place to bring local industries or producers together.
- ◆ Government policy is not supporting the marketing of locally produced goods even domestically within the country.

- ◆ Some Government policies are stifling the growth of local industries rather than supporting them to grow. In some cases, Government actions have been deliberately aimed at destroying some individual businesses.
- ◆ Issues facing the private sector in Ghana have been raised several times but the Government has not shown much commitment in addressing them.
- ◆ The Ministries of Finance and Trade are pursuing different and conflicting agenda. Until the two ministries collaborate to achieve a balance to attain the objectives of the Government, the problem of government policies hampering business growth will persist.
- ◆ The structures required to move the private sector and make it grow are non-existent.
- ◆ Liberalization has discouraged the use of local raw material in local production.
- ◆ There are a lot of challenges facing exporters, and these have been compounded with the introduction of WTO rules. It is not clear what the Government is doing to address these.
- ◆ Some of the country's laws discriminate against some companies. A clear example is VAT which limits the competitiveness of machete producers in the export market.

Suggestions

Participants also made suggestions for addressing some of these issues as follows: -

- ◆ Infrastructure should be developed as part of efforts to encourage strategic alliances with foreign partners and foster business in the country.
- ◆ There should be a review and analysis of Ghana's tariff regime to assess its suitability to the present environment.
- ◆ Tariff changes made in annual budgets should not be as a result of lobbying by individual groups but based on research to consider the full implications of these changes on sectors of the economy.
- ◆ State Trading Enterprises can and should be revived as part of efforts to address problems of marketing of locally produced goods within the country.
- ◆ The issue of subsidizing must be examined carefully since some research has shown that it is not entirely true that budgetary constraints may prevent us from subsidizing.

- ◆ Ghana needs to identify potentials within the country and develop them, rather than looking outside for help.
- ◆ The full implications of policies should be carefully and thoroughly considered before implementing them.
- ◆ The Private Sector should be involved in the signing of Government contracts, accords, agreements, and negotiations to ensure that its interests are taken into account.

Response to Comments & Suggestions

In responding to the issues and comments made, Mr. J.E.B. Haizel of Sigma One Corporation indicated that the main problem was that there has been no consistent way of dealing of trade policy. It has either been on an *ad hoc* basis, or based on pressure from a particular individual. What is needed to address the issues raised is a transparent, consistent and predictable structure. The issues have more to do with general macroeconomic policy and trade policy alone cannot probably address them. There is thus the need for assurance that such a structure will be put in place to address all issues.

In the case of Ghanaians not willing to work together, Mr. Haizel used the experiences of Latin American countries as an example to highlight the need for Ghanaian businesses to be seriously considering strategic alliances, particularly as a firm level policy. To him, the proposed Trade Policy Monitoring Committee is very critical in providing a solution and should be considered in more detail as it will bring all stakeholders together.

Mr. Hagan, of the Ministry for Trade & Industry also noted that the comments and issues raised all point to two things; inconsistency in the trade policy and the lack of a focal point where people can voice complaints and issues. He was of the view that a central body is needed to consider issues in a structured and comprehensive manner and assess what the impacts on the economy will be.

Finally, Dr. Maury Bredahl also reiterated that the many problems raised point to the inconsistency, capriciousness, chaos and unpredictability in the system. He supported the contention that the solution can be found in the Trade Policy Monitoring Committee.

Discussion Session: Institution Innovation and Development

This Discussion Session centered on the proposed Trade Policy Monitoring Committee. The Session involved participants asking for more clarifications and information on how the Committee will operate. Others were concerned about the need for a new body when there were already existing structures within MOTI to tackle issues of trade policy. It was also suggested that for an effective involvement of the private sector in the Committee, Government should make it mandatory for all private sector operators to belong to a trade association. (Please refer to Appendix 3 for more details).

Dr. Bredahl and Mr. Haizel addressed the questions and concerns raised as follows: -

- ◆ The Committee is to exist side by side with existing bodies responsible for trade negotiations but it has a broader responsibility of providing a Trade Policy which will form the basis of negotiations.
- ◆ For the Committee to be effective, it is proposed that it be set up as a ministerial body supported by technocrats. It is to be chaired by a Minister and have an Administrator. Details are being worked out but it is essential that its members are fairly senior people. It was, however, acknowledged that previous bodies set up along such lines have failed and the subject is still open to discussion and further debate.
- ◆ The Committee does not involve the creation of an entirely new body, as it will be made of representatives of already existing bodies.
- ◆ The Committee structure is intended to significantly provide coordination and ensure that there is consistency in the negotiation of Ghana's obligations and rights with macro and trade policy.
- ◆ The structures for benchmarking of policy are presently non-existent. The Committee if set up will be responsible for establishing benchmarks for the operations of trade policies.
- ◆ For a complaints system, there is the need for legislative or administrative decisions to consistently determine how to handle applications for unfair trade practices. The result should be a single trade complaints unit.
- ◆ If free trade is accepted as the Trade Policy, the Committee changes the role of MOTI from a champion of firms to the centre of policy analysis and to a defender of free and open markets.
- ◆ The Committee is structured to ensure the involvement of all stakeholders in trade policy.

At the end of this session, the name of the Committee was amended to Trade Policy Coordinating Committee (TPCC) to better reflect its role and functions.

²Factors Impacting on Trade Policy by Mr. Hagan,

The purpose of the presentation was to provide an overview of activities being carried out by the Ministry in support of this Workshop and highlight the expected outcome. Mr. Hagan started by presenting some statistics on Ghana's trade position. He noted that Ghana's share of the world market declined by 20% since 1995 while Africa as a whole increased its share by 7%. This implies that Ghana is being increasingly marginalized in international trade and the challenge is about what can be done to reverse this trend.

He also acknowledged that the country's general trade developments cannot be considered in isolation to world trade developments. Of importance are:

- ◆ The benefits and obligations under the WTO regulations.
- ◆ ACP/EU negotiations aimed at creating economic partnership agreements.
- ◆ Within ECOWAS, the aim is to increase sub-regional trade between Ghana and other members.
- ◆ The African Growth and Opportunities Act (ACT).
- ◆ African Union which is looking at creating economic blocks by way of regional economic units to create a common market for Africa.

Based on these trade developments, the objectives of Ghana's trade policy are: -

- ◆ The creation of a free and open trade regime.
- ◆ Ensure an export-led growth.
- ◆ Ensuring a level and fair playing field.

The Ministry has also established clear benchmarks against which trade policy will be measured and strategies through which these objectives will be achieved.

On structures being put in place, it was revealed that MOTI is receiving assistance from DFID and US AID in the development of trade policy. The Ministry has also established a Trade Policy Committee to consider issues emerging from studies, discussions with wider society, and institutional interactions. The duties of this Committee are to prepare policy positions, guide and supervise policy implementation, ensure consistency in policy across various sectors, and above all consider the impact of policy across all sections of society. The MOTI committee is made up of all Directors of the Ministry of Trade, some Senior Officers and representatives of DFID and meets at least once a week. (Please refer to Appendix 4 for more details).

² Ministry of Trade & Industry

Discussion Session: Trade Policy Coordination Committee

The third and final discussion session was a debate on whether there was a need for the proposed Trade Coordinating Committee after being informed of activities at the Ministry, especially the setting up of the Trade Policy Committee. (Please refer to Appendix 5 for more details).

The session started with participants wanting to know more about the MOTI Committee, particularly whether it was an operations team or policy formulation team. Other questions boarded on its effectiveness in addressing issues. Highlights of the debate were as follows:

- ◆ The Trade Policy Committee at MOTI is an operational team, an internal Ministry of Trade Committee for considering trade policy.
- ◆ Even if the MOTI Committee is only an operational team, it could become important in so far as it informs policy formulation on a regular basis. The main issue however is that, it is not confused or does not conflict with the Trade Policy Coordination Committee proposed by Sigma One, which will be dealing with a broader set of issues.
- ◆ MOTI is represented on the proposed Trade Policy Coordinating Committee and the internal arrangements of an internal Trade Committee will enable the Ministry play a central role. The MOTI Committee will thus not be duplicating the proposed TPCC.
- ◆ The MOTI Committee coordinates policy at the ministerial level, attempting to give consistency across trade and finance issues like tariffs or exemptions. At the national level, the issue is benchmarking and monitoring the effectiveness of policy, an operational activity primarily within the Ministry of Trade & Industry. The Research Centre will thus support trade policy monitoring by developing the measures, indices and techniques that allow the operational committee to judge whether trade policy is being implemented appropriately.

Participants agreed that the setting up of the TPCC is very appropriate, as it will serve as a central body through which the issues raised can be channeled. The consensus was that Participants were in favor of its establishment. Their concern however was ensuring that it is effective in addressing not only trade policy issues but also concerns of the private sector. According to Mr. Haizel, a way of addressing this would be to have aside from a Minister, an administrator who is sufficiently qualified, and wields a certain level of influence to make sure that decisions are implemented.

Composition of the Trade Policy Coordinating Committee

After some debate the following emerged as the consensus:

- ◆ The private sector will support the creation of a coordination committee that reports to the President or Vice President with research support from a Trade Policy

Research Centre.

- ◆ There should be within MOTI, a trade complaint centre, which would provide a vehicle for addressing issues raised by the private sector using a systematic approach.
- ◆ There should also be within MOTI, a vehicle for monitoring the benchmarking and monitoring of trade policy.

Annexes

1. Program
2. Results of Questionnaire
3. Discussion Session: Issues Affecting the Private Sector
4. Discussion Session: Institutional Arrangements for Implementation of a Trade Policy Framework
5. List of Participants

Annex 1 Workshop Program

Venue: Novotel, Accra

Date: Tuesday, December 17, 2002

8:30 - 9:10 am	Registration	
9:15 am	Chairman	Dr. O. Boeh-Ocansey
9:15 - 9:35 am	Opening statement	Hon. Minister for Trade & Industry
11:00 - 11:10 am	Break	
11:10 - 11:40 am	Presentation	Sigma One Corporation
11:40 - 1:00 pm	Discussion	
1:00 - 2:00 pm	Lunch Break	
2:15 - 2:35 pm	Presentation	Ministry of Trade & Industry
2:35 - 3:35 pm	Discussion	
3:35 - 3:50 pm	Break	
3:50 - 4:30 pm	Discussion	
4:35 pm	Close	

Annex 2: Results of Questionnaire

Towards the end of the workshop, Dr. Bredahl presented the results of a questionnaire distributed earlier to assess participants' view of what should be the focus of Ghana's trade policy. The results were as follows: -

- ◆ Protection of Ghana from International Trade - 24 out of 34 respondents indicated that protection was not enough.
- ◆ Ghana's Trade Policy - 23 out 34 responded that Ghana's trade policy should be open and free
- ◆ Trade Liberalization in Ghana - 30 out of 34 responded that Ghana has carried trade policy too far.

The results indicated a fundamental conflict in that, participants are asking for more protection and yet at the same time advocating free trade.

Annex 3 Discussion Session: Issues affecting the Private Sector

➤ *K. Ofei-Nkansah, General Agriculture Workers' Union of TUC*

- Proposed Outcome of Trade Policy as presented is based on identifying and exploring international opportunities and this makes it too external oriented.
- Trade policy should also strengthen domestic production, and this will help address issues of employment and labor.
- Trade policy is not always about international opportunities and if that is our orientation, it may lead to contradictions.

Response

- A dilemma facing Governments is the necessity of balancing domestic trade policy with international trade policy. The focus of the presentation was to deliberate on what type of policy framework should be put in place to enable Ghana take advantage of international opportunities. This must be balanced with the need to address domestic issues like poverty and healthcare. As suggested in the title, this is a presentation of national policy, with respect to international policy.
- The comment should be deferred until the end of the Workshop when a conclusion would have been drawn on how to balance domestic policy with international policy.

➤ *Nick Railston-Brown, Technoserve*

- What is meant by market failures, risk mitigation and economies of scale?

Response

- Market failure is when market prices fail to capture all the costs and benefits of producing a good.
- Risk mitigation can be explained by the provision of insurance as a means of creating predictability in the market.
- Economies of scale refer to the fact in some industries, competitiveness depends on reaching a certain scale of production.

➤ *Unidentified Participant*

- Are there any cases of near market perfection in our environment?

Response

- The best example in international trade association is the case where the British and Japanese maintain that in agriculture contributes benefits that are not captured in the prices offered to producers and thus producers should be offered subsidies as compensation.

➤ *Segun Adebajji, Ghana Breweries Limited*

- There are effects of domestic trade policy and some elements of inconsistency which need to be addressed. The excise duty regime in the sub-region shows a lot of disparities. As the region progresses towards the ECOWS free zone, Ghana not only faces the risk of losing revenue is lost but is also exposed to an uncompetitive environment where imports from neighboring countries are brought in at relatively lower prices, as compared to prices of locally produced goods. Even within the country, there are a lot of inconsistencies.
- Local industry has to be enabled to develop a strong domestic base.

Response

- The issue raised brings to mind the point already raised about Ghana's Trade Policy being described as inconsistent.
- The aim thus is to introduce a process for enacting policy in Ghana which can reduce the inconsistencies.
- The inconsistencies mentioned come about if decisions are made on a one by one basis rather than as part of a defined process by which issues are considered.

➤ *C. David Esch, Amex International*

- Any assumption that Ghanaians will cooperate and collaborate with each other on economic terms is very illusive even though they are able to collaborate on political terms. This presents a real challenge in working with small, medium scale enterprises in exports.
- Inject radio stations in the Diagram for a Trade Policy Monitoring Committee since FM stations have become one of the powerful tools for public forums where ideas and information are exchanged.

Response

- A number of actions have been taken by the Government where the private sector almost became an afterthought and it is very difficult in today's international environment to create something where business empowerment is an afterthought. The impressions about difficulties in forging strategic alliances are thus appreciated.

➤ ***Unidentified Participant***

- Do Ghanaians accept the observation that while we are able to cooperate on political terms, they do not do so on economic terms? Can something be done about it?

Response

- A research is being carried out and results so far indicate there are several reasons for this, including a cultural factor of not wanting to share credit and the issue of trust.
- Participants should be reminded that this issue of cooperation and collaboration is very important to the Workshop's conclusion as it is about strategic alliance to overcome difficulties in international trade.

➤ ***Mr. Hagan, Ministry of Trade & Industry***

- With this situation, how can trade policy be used to compel some other form of behaviour?

Response

- The Government has to have enough information on the core competencies of its people and then match these to opportunities in the international market. It is recognized that you cannot create an industry but you can empower people to develop and exploit their core competencies.

➤ ***W. A. Krofah, Ghana National Chamber of Commerce & Industry***

- In the past, Government has regarded businessmen with suspicion and portrayed them as crooks. This has not encouraged people to take up business as a serious venture.
- There is need for people who have a culture of business to foster cooperation and collaboration on economic terms.
- There is the need for cooperation between civil servants and businessmen, especially as businesses contribute to national revenue. Civil Servants should see themselves as partners in business.
- Ghana has a large informal trade sector and yet no trade policy has identified this group to provide them with the direction needed to modernize their operations.

➤ ***Rev. Dr. Kwabena Darko, Darko Farms Limited***

- The private sector needs more encouragement but no clear policies have been put in place to bring local industries or producers together.
- It is not even clear how Government policy is supporting local marketing even within the country, hence all the post-harvest losses.

- The policies in place are rather stifling the growth of local industries. In some cases, Government actions have been deliberately aimed at destroying some individual businesses.
- There is the need to satisfy the local market before we can effectively meet international demand.
- There real issue at stake is that Government continues to consider the private sector as an afterthought and this is the problem that should be addressed.
- The Government should take the private sector as a partner in development.
- Infrastructure should be developed to facilitate strategic alliances and foster business in the country.
- While other ECOWAS countries are putting up barriers to trade, Ghana has opened up its barriers to these countries, thus creating a competitive disadvantage for local firms.
- How do we talk of meeting WTO conditions when issues within the country have not been addressed?
- These same issues have been discussed over the years but there has been no improvement

➤ ***Johnny Kumah, State of Missouri Africa Office***

- There is the need for a stronger private sector voice that can lobby.

➤ ***W. A. Krofah, Ghana National Chamber of Commerce & Industry (GNCCI)***

- Part of the problem has to do with the fact that the Ministries of Finance and Trade are pursuing different and conflicting agenda. Until the two ministries collaborate to achieve a balance to attain the objectives of the Government, the problem of government policies hampering business growth will persist.

➤ ***G. K. Ofori, GUTA***

- The structures required to move the private sector and make it grow are non-existent.
- The Government pays no attention to the private sector. Thus even though the private sector has voiced its concerns to the Government, not much has been done to address them.

➤ ***Sal. Amegavie, GNCCI***

- The Government has not responded to the several calls from the Private Sector for the reinstatement of the Trade Advisory Council.
- Government has failed to adequately address issues affecting the private sector despite the fact that these issues have been highlighted several times.

➤ ***Ashok Mohinani, Poly Group of Companies***

- There have been several dialogues but there needs to be more productive dialogue between the private and public sectors.
- There should be an analysis of the tariff regime to assess its suitability to the present environment.
- Tariff changes made in annual budgets should not be as a result of lobbying by individual groups but based on research to consider the full implications of these changes on sectors of the economy.
- There should be feedback and execution of issues voiced at this Workshop.

➤ ***K. Ofei-Nkansah, General Agriculture Workers' Union of TUC***

- Research has shown that there is no economic justification for the state of the poultry industry in Ghana. It would be relatively cheaper to subsidize the poultry industry and make it more competitive than to continue to bring in imports.
- Some attention should also be paid to the oil palm industry to ensure that it is competitive and not competing with cheaper imported substitutes. The industry supports a large number of small producers and these are the people who need to be assisted to develop collaborations.
- State Trading Enterprises can and should be revived.
- The issue that trade policy must be consistent with budgetary constraints must be examined carefully since some research has shown that it is not entirely right that budgetary constraints may prevent us from subsidizing.
- Policies being pursued are actually stifling the economy.

Response

- With regard to the palm oil industry, the wider issue of productivity and quality needs to be looked at.

➤ ***Nick Ayison, Scanstyle Mim Limited***

- Liberalization has discouraged the use of local raw material in local production.
- Is Government aware of the challenges facing exporters, especially with the introduction of WTO rules and is it doing anything about these problems?
- Ghana needs to identify potentials within the country and develop them, rather than looking outside for help.
- The full implications of policies should be carefully and thoroughly considered before implementing them.
- It is presently easier to import lumber than to get concessions in Ghana.

➤ ***F. D. Tay, Consumers' Association of Ghana***

- There has been very little consideration given to consumer needs in the presentation and where it is mentioned, it is only in relation to domestic trade policy.
- The Diagram for the proposed Trade Policy Monitoring Committee portrays a very small role for NGOs and civil society, looking at the size of the rectangle.

Response

- Depending on how consumers are defined, then consumer interest can be said to be the same as national interest.
- It is accepted that the consumer as the ultimate user of goods and services needs to be factored into the analysis.
- The size of boxes in the Diagram is not a representation of the role to be played by any particular group. All groups identified in the Diagram have a crucial role to play.

➤ ***Seth Quao, Crocodile Machetes Limited***

- Some of the country's laws discriminate against some companies. A clear example is VAT which limits the competitiveness of machete producers in the export market.

➤ ***Ken Bentsi-Enchill, VAT Service***

- The problem can be attributed to the fact that the formulation of the VAT law and granting of exemptions was greatly influenced by lobby and other groups who had very limited knowledge of the operations of the tax.
- A better approach will be to involve the right people in reviewing the law.

➤ ***Unidentified Participant***

- ◆ The Private Sector should be involved in the signing of Government contracts, accords, agreements, and negotiations to ensure that its interests are always taken into account.

Annex 4

Discussion Session Institutional Arrangements for Implementation of a Trade Policy Framework

➤ ***Segun Adebajji, Ghana Breweries Ltd.***

- What is the exact role of the MOTI Committee mentioned in the presentation? Is it an operations or policy formulation team?
- Who really makes the ultimate decisions for this Committee? Are we dealing with a group of people who have the mandate to make decisions or with technocrats?

Response

- It is an operational team, an internal Ministry of Trade Committee for considering trade policy.

➤ ***K. Offei Nkansah, General Agricultural Workers' Union of TUC***

- This committee may be only an operational one at this stage but may be of importance in that it informs policy formulation on a regular basis.
- The name of the Committee should not conflict with the national Trade Policy Coordinating Committee that has been proposed.
- There is the need for more clarity on the wider Trade Policy Coordinating Committee.

Response

- MOTI is represented on the proposed Trade Policy Coordinating Committee and the internal arrangements of an internal Trade Committee are to enable the Ministry play a central role. They will in fact not be duplicating the TPCC.
- The MOTI Committee coordinates policy at the ministerial level, attempting to give consistency across trade and finance issues like tariffs or exemptions. At the national level, the issue is benchmarking and monitoring the effectiveness of policy, an operational activity primarily within the Ministry of Trade & Industry. The Research group thus supports the trade policy monitoring by developing the measures, indices and techniques that allow the operational committee to judge whether trade policy is being implemented appropriately.

➤ ***C. David Esch, Amex International***

- How do we determine if dumping is actually going on?

Response

- There is no framework for addressing the issue of dumping in Ghana.

➤ ***K. Offei Nkansah, General Agricultural Workers' Union of TUC***

- WTO rules on anti dumping are so complicated that poorer countries cannot utilize them and this raises the issue of a level playing field.

Response

- WTO rules do not offer much guidance on anti-dumping.

➤ ***Kofi Larbi, MOTI***

- There is a WTO agreement on dumping but it is difficult and costly to implement.
- The anti-dumping initiative has to come from the private sector.

➤ ***Unidentified Participant***

- The problem of dumping should be addressed by the Ministry of Trade without any interventions from external bodies.

➤ ***W. A. Krofah, Ghana National Chamber of Commerce & Industry (GNCCI)***

- The setting up of the TPCC is very appropriate as it will serve as a central body through which the issues being raised can be channeled.
- Participants should give their approval to its establishment so that the Workshop will end with some concrete decisions for the Ministry to consider.

➤ ***Segun Adebajji, Ghana Breweries Ltd.***

- The Committee is basically being set up to deal with issues of policy. How do we ensure that issues referred to it by the private sector will actually be addressed?

Response

- There is the need for some policy coordination at the Ministerial level.
- To ensure that the Committee works, it should have aside from a Minister, an administrator who is sufficiently qualified, and also wields a certain level of influence to make sure that decisions are implemented.

Suggestions for the Composition of the TPCC

At this point of the discussion, the Chairman asked participants to now centre discussions on the composition of the TPCC. He suggested that the TPCC can be looked at in the light of the Economic Management Team (EMT), which is extra ministerial.

➤ *Mr. Hagan, MOTI*

- TPCC is a specialized unit providing input to trade policy and will not operate along the same lines as the EMT.
- There is still the problem of a central point where the private sector can lodge complaints.

Response

- The organisational structure of the Gateway Secretariat presents a model which has been effective. The Administrator of the TPCC could similarly be at a level that can command a significant level of influence and authority.

➤ *W. A. Krofah, GNCCI*

- With regard to providing an avenue for addressing private sector issues with respect to trade policy, how does the Committee relate to the functions and role of the Ministry for Private Sector Development to ensure there are no conflicts?

Response

- The Private Sector Development Ministry has clearly defined roles and even if there is some overlapping, it basically has to do with the fact that there are private sector operators in all sectors.

➤ *Chairman*

- The Ministry's handling of the Tuna issue and how this Committee would have addressed it may be compared to throw more light on the discussion.

Response

- The Ministry has set up a Task Force made up representatives from MOTI, Export Promotion Council and the Private Sector with legal support being provided by the Attorney General's Department and Legal Section of MOTI.
- If there had been a body like the TPCC with sufficient research backing, there would have been no need to set up a task force.
- Debate should concentrate on how to implement the TPCC to ensure it addresses the requirements of coherency and coordination.

➤ ***F. D. Tay, Consumers' Association of Ghana***

- The Committee should be set up within MOTI since it is the body responsible for trade and so will ensure that the Committee gets the needed support and resources for its operations
- TPCC should be composed of both technical and policy experts so that it will have the capacity to consider not only policy issues but also any other trade issues affecting the private sector and also be in a position to advise the Minister.
- TPCC should not be a ministerial committee because that has never worked. To give it the needed clout however, it should be chaired by the Deputy Minister and have representations from the private and public sectors, NGOs and research community to provide it with the needed expertise.

➤ ***Rev. Dr. Kwabena Darko, Darko Farms***

- Past experience has shown that the Deputy Minister refers decisions to the Minister. The Minister should thus serve on the Committee to allow the Committee to make decisions without having to seek approval from a higher authority.

➤ ***Segun Adebajji, Ghana Breweries Ltd.***

- The Committee should be at the extra ministerial level with representatives from the Ministries of Trade & Industry, Ministry of Finance and the Private Sector.
- It should be headed by an executive appointed by and reporting to the President or Vice President

Response

- This is a very good suggestion and addresses most of the concerns raised.
- The consensus then is for an extra ministerial body with a sufficient level of authority.

➤ ***Unidentified Participant***

- If the Committee is to address issues of trade, why does it have to involve other Ministries apart from MOTI?

Response

- The TPCC is a coordinating body and will be dealing with issues that cut across other Ministries.

➤ *Unidentified Participant*

- There should be two separate committees; one dealing with policy issues at the ministerial level and the other addressing private sector concerns at an extra ministerial level.

Annex 5 Participant List

NAME	TITLE/ORGANIZATION	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
Dr. Osei Boeh-Ocansey	Private Enterprise Foundation	515601	info@pefghana.org
Ashok Mohinani	Poly Group	229962	Ashok@PolyGroupgh.com
John Gyamfi	Bank of Ghana	666902 Ext.5217	Jgyamfi@bog.gov.gh
Brahms Achiayao	Ministry of Trade & Industry	686518	
Kofi Larbi	Ministry of Trade & Industry	665586	
Kofi Amenya	Ministry of Trade & Industry	686529	
M. J. Patel	Tema Steel Company Ltd	022-302899	tscl@africaonline.com.gh
Ken Bentsi-Enchill	VAT Service	661525/6	kenbentsienchill@yahoo.com
Kusi-Aidoo	CEPS	666841 Ext. 1076	jdkusiaidoo@yahoo.com
Seth N. S. Quao	Crocodile Matchets (GH) Ltd	022-302555	cromat@ghana.com
Anna A. Hinson	NBSSI	661396/7	
Nick Railston-Brown	Technoserve	773873-5	
Yaw Nyarko-Mensah	Ministry of Trade & Industry	686546	mis.moti@africaonline
Adu Frimpong	Ministry of Trade & Industry	686560	
C. David Esch	Amex International	7010738	desch@ighmail.com

NAME	TITLE/ORGANIZATION	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
G. K. Ofori	GUTA	669665	
K. F. Asmah	HAG	402390	
Ruby Neils-Palme	MOFA	668523	naamoya@yahoo.com
Kwesi Yankah	Internal Revenue Service	664166	
Schmidt Bjarne	Managing Director, GHACEM	220101	
Enrique De La Piedra	Resident Rep., IMF	666031	
Nick Ayison	Scanstyle Mim Ltd.	227526	
Dr. Sam Mensah	SEM	240664/5	smensah@semfinancial.com
Pat Adusei		227744	
Dan Adjabu	GNCC	761819	
Vesper Suglo	MOFA - PPRSD	302638/ 024-388275	
Kistina Biritwum	Director, Ghana Standards Board	501492	gsbnep@ghana.com
Dr. Berko	Ministry for Private Sector Development		
Moses Agyemang	Senior Economist, PEF	515604	pef@igmail.com
E. Agyare-Boakye	Assistant Senior Economist, PEF	515604	pef@igmail.com
Rev. Dr. Kwabena Darko	Darko Farms	774902	kwabenadarko@hotmail.com
W. A. Krofah	GNCCI	779731	rmmsg@africaonline.com.gh

NAME	TITLE/ORGANIZATION	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
Patrick Chrapah	Marketer, Latex Foam Ltd	231160	
Johnny Kumah	State of Missouri Africa Office	507600	futolek@ghana.com
G. K. Fynn	Ministry of Trade & Industry	664776	
Mallam I. Seidu	Ministry of Food & Agriculture	668248	
Moisan Gilles	Vlisco Ghana Group (JTL,. - GTP,. PAT)	027-7550550	gilles.moisan@vliscogh.com
Segun Adebajji	Managing Director, Ghana Breweries Ltd., Achimota	411300	o.s.adebanji@heineken.com
Hon. Akwasi Osei-Adjei	Deputy Minister of Trade & Industry	667382	
Hon. Kofi Konadu Apraku	Minister of Trade & Industry	663327	
J.E.B Haizel	Sigma One Corporation	222274	
Dr. Maury Bredahl	Sigma One Corporation	222274	
Dr. Curtis Youngblood	Sigma One Corporation	222274	
Dr. A. F. Gockel	Sigma One Corporation	222274	
Esther Ofosuapea	Sigma One Corporation	222274	
Daniel Boakye	World Bank	229681	dboakye@worldbank.org
K. Ofei-Nkansah	GAWU of TUC	665514/672469/027-7560722	
Sal Amegavie	GNCCI	662427	gncc@ncs.gh.com

Daniel Hagan	Ag. Director, PPME, MOTI	664776	
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NAME	TITLE/ORGANIZATION	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
Appiah-Danyame	Ministry of Trade & Industry	660693	appido@internetghana.com
Emmanuel Awuri	Ministry of Trade & Industry	686532	Awuri@hotmail.com
F. D. Tay	CAG	784461	cag@ghana.com
Kwadwo Agyepong	Ag. Chief Director, MOTI	686525	
Moso Osei	Rapporteur	024-230162	
Barbara Ghansah	Rapporteur	024-230162	
	Metro TV News Crew	765700-3	
	GTV News Crew	229387	
	Free Press	226604	
	Adom FM	022-206207	
	TV3 News Crew	228697	
	ISD (Ghana News Bulletin)	228011	
	Joy FM	248934	
	New Times Corporation	228282	theoyartey@yahoo.com
	GNA	662381	